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ABSTRACT

This book addresses issues in the field of school desegregation and public policy and compares the desegregation effectiveness of voluntary plans with magnet schools to mandatory reassignment plans with magnet schools. Issues addressed include: (1) how school desegregation plans have evolved over time; (2) how one measures the desegregation effectiveness of desegregation remedies; (3) whether policies are more likely to achieve their goals and be more effective if citizens are commanded to obey or given incentives to do so; (4) the characteristics of magnet schools that are attractive to both white and black parents; (5) the effect of magnet schools on the quality of education; (6) the national school desegregation trends; and (7) the relative merit of voluntary and mandatory plans as assessed by criteria commonly used by policy analysts. Using a survey of school personnel and parents in 119 school districts, the document reports that the voluntary plans with incentives (magnets) ultimately produce more interracial exposure than the mandatory plans--a conclusion that contradicts three decades of research that judged mandatory reassignment plans more effective than voluntary plans in desegregating schools. (Contains over 150 references and an index.) (GLR)

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